A

LETTER

TO

Monſieur *Boileau Depreaux*;

Occaſion'd by the

VICTORY

AT

BLENHEIM.

——— *Cupidum, Pater optime, vires*
Deficiunt neque enim Quivis horrentia Pilis
Agmina, nec Fractâ pereuntes cuſpide Gallos—

Hor. Sat. 1. L. 2.

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

LETTER

TO

Monſieur *Boileau Depreaux*;

Occaſion'd by the

VICTORY at *BLENHEIM.*

SINCE hir'd for Life, thy Servant Muſe muſt ſing
Succeſſive Conqueſts, and a happy King;
Muſt of a Man Immortal loudly boaſt;
And bring him Lawrels, whatſoe'er they coſt:
What Turn wilt thou employ, what Colours lay
On the Event of that Superior Day,
In which One Engliſh Subject's proſp'rous Hand
(So JOVE did will, ſo *ANNA* did command;)
Broke the proud Column of thy Maſter's Praiſe,
Which Sixty Winters had conſpir'd to raiſe?

From the loſt Field a Hundred Standards brought
Muſt certainly be Fortune's laſting Fault.
BAVARIA's Stars muſt be accus'd, which ſhone
That Fatal Day the mighty Work was done,
And darted Rays oblique upon the *Gallic* Sun.
Or ſhall our Muſe eſſay a higher Flight?
Some erring Deities diſturb'd the Fight,
And Fate miſtook, tho' LEWIS order'd right.

Epiſtre 4. du Sr. Boileau Dépreaux au Roy. *Envain pour TeLouer*, &c

When thy young Muſe invok'd the tuneful Nine
To ſay how LEWIS did not paſs the *Rhine*,
What Work had we with *Wageninghen*, *Arnheim*,
Places that could not be reduc'd to Rhime?
And tho' the Poet made his laſt Efforts,
Wurts——who could mention in Heroic——*Wurts*?
But, tell me, haſt thou reaſon to complain
Of the rough Triumphs of the laſt Campaign?
The *Danube* reſcu'd, and the Empire ſav'd;
Say, is the Majeſty of Verſe retriev'd?
And would it prejudice thy ſofter Vein
To ſing the Princes LEWIS or EUGENE?
Is it too hard in happy Verſe to place
The *Vans* and *Vanders* of the *Rhine* and *Maes*?

Her

Her Warriors *ANNA* ſends from *Tweed* and *Thames*,
That FRANCE may fall by more harmonious Names.
Hamilton, *Lumley*, *Palmes*, or *Ingoldsby*,
May tolerably well with Verſe agree.
And MALBRÔ, Poet, MALBRÔ has a Name
Which thou and all thy Breth'ren may proclaim,
Elected to immortal Lays, and ſure of endleſs Fame.

Cutts is in Meeter ſomething harſh to read,
Place me the Valiant *Gouram* in his ſtead:
Let the Intention make the Number good,
And generous *Sylvius* ſtand for honeſt *Wood*.
Churchil, if that rough Sound offend the Strain,
Be true to Glorious Worth, and ſing the *Dane*.

I grant, old Friend old Foe, (for ſuch we are
Alternate as the Chance of Peace and War,)
That we Poetic Folks, who muſt reſtrain
Our meaſur'd Sayings in an equal Chain,
Have Troubles utterly unknown to thoſe
Who let their Fancy looſe in rambling Proſe.
For inſtance now, how hard it is for me
To make my Matter and my Verſe agree?

In one great Day on HOCHSTET's *fatal Plain*
FRENCH *and* BAVARIANS *Twenty Thouſand ſlain;*
Puſh'd thro' the DANUBE *to the Shoars of* STYX
Squadrons Eighteen, Battalions Twenty Six:
Officers Captive made and private Men,
Of theſe Twelve Hundred, of thoſe Thouſands Ten.
Tents, Ammunition, Colours, Carriages,
Cannons and Kettle-Drums—— ſweet Numbers theſe.
AVE APOLLO!—— Sir——one Moment's Eaſe.
Tell me, is this to reckon or rehearſe?
A Commiſſary's Liſt, or Poet's Verſe?

Why Faith, DEPREAUX, there's Senſe in what you ſay,
I told you where my Difficulty lay;
He that can make the rough Recital chime,
Or bring the Sum of *Lewis'* Loſs to Rhime,
May make Arithmetic and Epic meet,
And NEWTON's Books in DRYDEN's Stile repeat.

O BOILEAU, had it been APOLLO's Will
That I had ſhar'd a Portion of thy Skill,
Had this poor Breaſt receiv'd the Heav'nly Beam,
And were my Numbers equal to my Theam,

To

To nobleſt Strains I'd raiſe my ſerious Voice,
And calling ev'ry Muſe to bleſs my Choice,
ARMS and a QUEEN I'd ſing; who, Great and Good,
From peaceful *Thames* to *Danube*'s wond'ring Flood
Sent forth the Terror of Her high Commands,
To ſave the Nations from invading Hands;
To vindicate a ſinking Empire's Cauſe,
And fix the jarring World with equal Laws.

I'd place the QUEEN in *Windſor*'s ſacred Grove,
Attended by the Gods of War and Love;
Both ſhou'd with equal Zeal Her Smiles implore,
Theſe prompt to fix Her Joys, thoſe to extend Her Pow'r.

Sudden, the *Nymphs* and *Tritons* ſhou'd appear;
And, as Her Looks may diſſipate their Fear,
With active Dance ſhou'd pleaſe Her Eye, with vocal Shells Her Ear.
Their Maſter *Thames* ſhou'd leave the neighb'ring Shoar,
By his ſtrong Anchor known, and Silver Oar,
Shou'd lay his Enſigns at his Sov'raigns Feet,
And Audience mild with humble Grace intreat.

With Pious Speech the River ſhou'd complain,
That whilſt he bleſſes *ANNA*'s careful Reign,
Whilſt furtheſt Seas are by his Fleets ſurvey'd,
And on his happy Banks each *India* laid,
His Breth'ren *Maes*, and *Waal*, and *Rhine*, and *Saar*
Feel the hard Burthen of oppreſſive War;
That *Danube* ſcarce retains his rightful Courſe
Againſt Two Rebel Armies neighb'ring Force:
And all muſt weep ſad Captives to the *Sein*
Unleſs unchain'd and freed by BRITAIN'S QUEEN.

The Valiant Sov'raign calls Her Gen'ral forth,
Nor names Her Bounty, nor proclaims his Worth.
She tells him he muſt *Europe*'s Fate redeem,
And by that Labour merit Her Eſteem:
She bids him wait Her to the Sacred Hall,
Shows him Prince EDWARD and the Conquer'd *Gaul*.
Fixing the Bloody Croſs upon his Breaſt,
Says he muſt Die, or ſuccour the Diſtreſs'd;
Placing the Saint an Emblem by his Side,
She tells him Virtue arm'd muſt conquer Lawleſs Pride.

The HERO bows obedient, and retires;
The QUEEN's Commands exalt the Warrior's Fires.
His Steps are to the ſilent Woods inclin'd,
The great Deſign revolving in his Mind:
When to his Sight a Heav'nly Form appears,
Her Hand a Palm, her Head a Lawrel wears.

Me, ſhe begins, the faireſt Child of *Jove*,
Courted by Men below, and bleſs'd by Gods above,
Me, the bright Source of Wealth, and Pow'r, and Fame,
(Nor need I ſay VICTORIA is my Name)
Me, the great Father down to Thee has ſent,
He bids me wait at Thy diſtinguiſh'd Tent,
To execute what *ANNA*'s Wiſh wou'd have:
Her Subject Thou, I only am Her Slave.
Dare then, Thou much belov'd by ſmiling Fate;
'Tis *ANNA*'s Glory, and Thou ſhalt be Great:
Go forth, and be to Diſtant Nations known,
My future Fav'rite, and my darling Son.
At *Schellenberg* I'll viſit Thee again,
And ſit propitious on Thy Helm in *Blenheim*'s glorious Plain.

The Goddeſs ſay'd, nor wou'd admit Reply,
But cut the liquid Air, and gain'd her native Sky.

His high Commiſſion thro' the Land is known,
And thronging Countries to his Standard run.
He marches thoughtful, and he ſpeedy ſails;
(Bleſs him ye Seas! and proſper him ye Gales!)
BELGIA receives him welcome to her Coaſt,
And almoſt ceaſes to weep WILLIAM loſt.
Since that Great *Hercules* reſign'd to Fate,
The *Atlas* This, who muſt ſupport her State.

Secret and ſwift behold the Chief advance,
He ſees half GERMANY combin'd with FRANCE;
Combin'd in vain——He draws the fatal Sword,
The Troops obedient wait the Maſter Word:
ANNE and St. *George*, the charging Gen'ral cries;
Shrill Eccho from the neighb'ring Wood replies
ANNE and St. *George*——at that auſpicious Sign
The Standards move, the threat'ning Armies join.
Of Eight great Hours Time meaſures out the Sands,
And *Europe*'s Fate in doubtful Ballance ſtands;

The

The Ninth VICTORIA comes—o'er MARLBRÔ's Head
Confeſs'd She ſits, the Hoſtile Troops recede—
Triumphs the *Goddeſs*, from her Promiſe free'd.
The *Roman* Eagle on the *Danube* Shoars
Hears how the *Britiſh* Lion Victor roars,
She claps her joyful Wings, and high to *Julian* Glory ſoars.

Fir'd with the Thoughts which theſe Idea's raiſe,
And great Ambition of my Country's Praiſe,
The *Britiſh* Muſe ſhou'd like the *Mantuan* riſe,
Scornful of Earth and Clouds, ſhou'd reach the Skies,
With Wonder (tho' with Envy ſtill) purſu'd by human Eyes.
But, Goddeſs, change the Stile—juſt now I ſaid
I ne'r was Maſter of the tuneful Trade,
Or the ſmall Genius which my Youth cou'd boaſt
In Proſe and Buſineſs lyes extinct and loſt;
Bleſs'd, if I may ſome younger Muſe excite,
Point out the Game, and animate the Flight:
That from *Marſeilles* to *Calais* FRANCE may know
As we have Victors we have Poets too:
That tho' amongſt our ſelves, with too much Heat,
We ſometimes wrangle when we ſhou'd debate;

(A conſequential Ill which Freedom draws,
A bad Effect, but from a Noble Cauſe:)
We can with univerſal Zeal advance
To curb the faithleſs Arrogance of *France*.
Our Muſes as our Armies can agree,
To humble LEWIS, and reply to Thee.
Nor ſhall we want juſt Subject for our Strains,
Whilſt MARLBRÔ's Arm eternal Lawrel gains,
And in the Land where SPENCER ſung, a new ELISA reigns.

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